

# 2021 KLAS Users' Conference

*June 7-10, 2021*

*Virtual Conference*

*Business Meeting Minutes*

The business meeting of the 2021 KLAS Users Conference was called to order by President Jen Buzolich on June 10, 2021 at 11:30 AM Eastern. Jen introduced the officers: Vice President Michael Lang, Secretary Erin Pawlus, and Immediate Past President Chandra Thornton. Their main goals are to plan and coordinate the KLAS Users' Conference and other events, assist Keystone in determining objectives for the software, and to discuss any subject matter that may benefit the Users' Group in understanding and using the KLAS system.

## **Disposition of the Minutes of the 2019 KLAS Users' Group Business Meeting**

Minutes were available on PheedLoop for members to review before the meeting. Leslie Bowman, Wolfner Library, made a motion to accept the minutes as written. It was seconded by Craig Hayward, North Carolina LBPH. Motion approved.

## **Elections**

There was a last call for nominations for the positions of Secretary and Vice President. There were no further nominations.

The current candidates accepted their nominations before the business meeting. Biographies of these candidates were included in the agenda and read aloud before the vote. The candidate for Secretary is Tony Bucci, Arizona Talking Book Library. The candidate for Vice President is Jared Leslie, Foundation for Blind Children.

Since there was only one candidate for each position, the election proceeded at the conference via voce. Attendees were all in favor of electing the candidates and it was announced that the officer transitions will occur on August 1st. The Secretary serves a term of two years and can stand for re-election at the end of their first two-year term. The Vice President serves a one-year term and then serves as President and Immediate Past-President for one year each.

Committee Reports were as follows.

## **Program Committee**

Erin Pawlus, the committee chair, provided the report. She introduced and thanked the committee members for their work during an ongoing programming cycle. Traditionally, the conference planning committees take a break and then reconvene in preparation for a conference. After the conference switched to a biennial schedule, they decided to offer online programming monthly, alternating between sessions led by IRCs, Talking Book libraries, and Keystone. While it was not the intent, it provided an opportunity for the Users' Group to remain connected and learning during the pandemic.

Starting in 2021, the committee moved to quarterly online offerings since it was a conference year. Conference planning commenced, though it was uncertain whether it would take the form of an in-person, hybrid, or virtual event. They were grateful for the variety of programs that were submitted and thankful to the speakers who made the first virtual conference a success. She welcomed the attendees to reach out to her if they were interested in joining the Program Committee.

## **Logistics Committee**

Chandra Thornton, the committee chair, provided the report. She announced the names of the committee members. The committee started monthly meetings in August 2020. Dr. Kathy Segers had previously volunteered to host an in-person conference at the Tennessee School for the Blind in Nashville and offered campus apartments as a lodging option. The committee also discussed off-site lodging and narrowed the list to two area hotels.

In November, they settled on three conference themes that were sent to the Users' Group for a vote.

As planning progressed, the committee created a survey to send to the KLAS Users' Group to get feedback on COVID-19, travel, and budgets. They also considered flexible ways to plan events with possible limitations in place. Both Logistics and Programming were mindful of the uncertainties of the pandemic and Jen Buzolich, KLAS Users' President, penned a statement to the KLAS community. This culminated in a joint meeting of both planning committees and the officers to discuss the direction of the conference, either partial hybrid or all virtual. The decision was made to move forward with a virtual conference.

Following this decision, they set the conference dates, provided feedback on platform options, and discussed speaker and presenter gifts. The role of the Logistics Committee shifted in the virtual environment, and they helped behind the scenes and assisted as user moderators during the sessions. She thanked the committee members for their creativity in meeting the changes and challenges during the year.

## **KLAS Development Advisory Committee (KDAC)**

Jen Buzolich provided the report on behalf of committee chair Cyndi Reimer, who had accepted a position at another agency. She announced the members and she thanked them for their time and participation. The role of KDAC is to advise Keystone on development and identify the improvements that are higher priority. Members rotate every other year, so people can step forward and contact the KLAS Users' Group Officers if they are interested in joining KDAC. The committee is comprised of members from different sized NLS network libraries (small, medium, large), IRCs, and special libraries, and provide representation from all segments of the Users' Group. Meetings occur monthly. KDAC is an excellent way to stay up-to-date and involved and speak up for what is seen as a need. They welcome new members and will miss the outgoing members.

## **Julie Klauber Award Committee**

Andrea Ewing Callicutt, Keystone liaison to the committee, provided the report. She expressed her appreciation to everyone who served on the committee, and she named the members. When the KLAS Users' Conference was an annual event, the Julie Klauber Award had happened every year. The person who was selected would receive travel, registration, and accommodations to the conference. The award is given not only in recognition of great work, but also to provide an opportunity for a recipient to attend the conference when they may not have been able to otherwise. In making the selection, the committee reviews nominees who not only use KLAS in their regular duties, but who also make a significant impact in service to their community in the spirit of Julie Klauber. The nomination period was shorter than normal this year. In total, 7 people were nominated, though the final list was reduced by 2 because they had already received the award previously. The committee reviewed the remaining nominees and then prioritized and named their top choices to present to James Burts. This year, Alycia Ensminger of the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library was selected. Congratulations were given to Alycia, who did significant work. It was an excellent slate of nominees. She thanked the nominees and acknowledged that they all contribute a lot to their organizations. They are unable to recognize everyone, but she did want to share their names with the attendees.

## **Annual v. Biennial Conference**

Jen brought this topic back to the Users' Group for input. Attendees would start the conversation, but they would not make a decision during the business meeting. There was a request to revisit the annual conference format. Historically, the conference occurred annually until about two years ago. After a vote, there was a revision of the bylaws that changed the frequency to "at least biennially". Therefore, they would not need to change the bylaws if people wanted to meet more often. She opened the discussion to the floor.

Craig Hayward has enjoyed the current format though he does miss the annual format. He would like to hear what others think and he is open to revisiting.

Michael Lang, Kansas Talking Books, started attending after the switch to biennial. In terms of funding, he would be able to justify a conference every year but attendance at two conferences would be difficult. It works to alternate it with the NLS national conference.

Andrea reminded everyone that in the off-year, there was on-going programming once a month. If we do stay with biennial, we can continue the monthly virtual option.

Dr. Kathy Segers, Tennessee School for the Blind, presented the IRC standpoint. Most are a part of state agencies, and the states are reluctant to do more than 1 or 2 out-of-state conferences a year. Due to the relationship with APH, it is required to attend their conference every year and it is very hard to get a second approved in the same year. It would be easier to justify every other year. She also introduced her replacement Allen Huang who will take over after she retires. Tennessee is still willing to host the next conference as the planning has already been done and they can host whenever the next in-person conference occurs.

Teresa Kalber, Colorado Talking Book Library, said that the idea of biennial conference was first proposed way back in San Diego, but was brought up and voted on in 2019. The goal was to do something virtual in the off-year so more staff can attend. This year they had 10 staff registered. It is nice for them to participate in the Reader Advisor and Circulation Birds of a Feather sessions so they can get that experience directly instead of hearing about it later. There is a benefit to an in-person conference, but the virtual option should be continued.

Craig agreed and said that online tools have evolved. Now, programming has changed and there is more that we can do with the current technology.

Additional comments from the chat:

Leslie Bowman, Wolfner Library: Every year switching between in-person and via Zoom? (Andrea agreed that this was a part of the discussion.) Virtual certainly allows each group to have more people participating!

Allie Lovette, South Carolina Talking Books: Alternating virtual and in person would be neat

Andrea Ewing Callicutt: We have over 250 attendees in this year's conference.

Sam Lundberg, New Mexico LBPD: Virtual has allowed staff from NM1A, who would otherwise not be able to attend, to participate and learn. So a virtual (full or mini) conference on NLS conference years would get my vote.

Pat Herndon, Georgia Public Library Service: I like biennial. I also like virtual. All Georgia staff are registered to attend all or part of this virtual conference.

Nancy Holt, Idaho Commission for Libraries: Idaho requests a one year in person one year virtual.

Ricardo Cisneros, SF Public Library - Talking Books and Braille Center: Maybe one year virtual / 1-2 days and the other one in person

Catherine Durivage, Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library: I agree w/ Ricardo. We cannot send many to an in-person conference as we can with a virtual one.

## **New Business**

On behalf of James Gleason, who could not attend the business meeting, Craig Hayward proposed new language in Article VII of the bylaws.

### Current:

**The Conference Program Committee.** Committee members should include at least one Officer, the local host, and other members who would like to serve on the committee. One person from an IRC and other agencies not from NLS libraries should serve on the committee when possible.

### Proposed (added at the end of the statement):

In order to maintain interest and in furtherance of developing both technical training and community; members of the Program Committee shall, from time to time, be asked to continue to serve and plan events during the off-year from the KLAS Users' Conference.

It will be discussed at the next Officers meeting to discuss next steps and to plan the online vote.

There being no other business, Chandra Thornton, Palm Beach County Library System, made a motion that the business meeting be adjourned. It was seconded by Craig Hayward. There being unanimous approval, the 2021 Business Meeting was adjourned at 12:27 PM Eastern.

Respectfully submitted by Erin Pawlus, Secretary